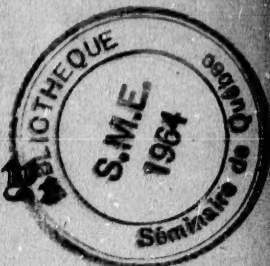


90 *sermons No 2*

A SERMON

FOR

Saint Patrick's Day



PREACHED BY

THE REVEREND MR. MACMAHON,

ON THE

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AT

SAINT JACQUES'S CHURCH,

MONTREAL.

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1827.



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FOR

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY.

EXALTAVI electum de plebe meâ ; veritas mea et misericordia cum ipso,
et in nomine meo exaltabitur cornu ejus. — *Psalm 88 ; verses 20 and 25.*

I have exalted my chosen one from amongst my people ; my truth and my justice shall be with him, and in my name shall his power be exalted.

If it be justly considered a difficult task, adequately to portray, in terms sufficiently significant, a simple sensation of the mind, which, fitting by, is received by the will, nurtured by the understanding, and tenderly fondled in the heart ; how superlatively more difficult must be the attempt to describe in words, the feelings of that human soul, whose every power feels surcharged with a sacred anxiety to catch at every ray, and cherish every hope which characterized her happier and more youthful days ; feelings, which a subject like the present is not likely to assuage, which the Anniversary of this solemnity would enhance in all their bearings, and array in all their native lustre. Such then, my brethern, are the sensations which throb in every vein, and search to accompany every thought of mine, while I would picture

to the eyes of your understanding, the eminent sanctity of one of the most illustrious, the most distinguished, and one of the most miraculous of the Saints of God. I am already apprehensive of my own inability, and begin to feel the weight of the subject I am about to undertake. Be not therefore surprised if I pause for a moment, it is merely to indulge what none could suppress; because, when I see around me in this sacred temple, assembled on such a solemn occasion, far, yes, very far remote from the land that gave them birth, a portion of that people, whose magnanimity has reached to the remotest corners of the civilized world; whose unbounded hospitality is more than sufficient to characterize the sanctity of their isle; whose unbending constancy to maintain inviolable, and shew, in all its pristine greatness, the purity of that faith which they received from their forefathers, merits a title sufficiently illustrious to deck the proudest annals, that the vista of time can treasure in the sacred records of futurity. I say, when I see united, a people distinguished for so many virtues, for the purpose of solemnizing with their wonted zeal, and marked affection, the anniversary of that glorious Apostle, to whom, under God, they owe their delivery from the depth of impiety, and the darkness of infidelity. I must admire such zeal, while I applaud the devotion by which it is inspired. I feel apprehensive only on my own part, lest from any defect of mine, you should be wanting in a knowledge of that eminent sanctity, with which it has been the will of God to endow the Apostle of our island: and as it sometimes happens that the purest gold, and the richest diamonds are left neglected and alone, either by the husbandman who knows not how to appreciate their just value, from

a want of that information, which could benefit the society of which he is a member, or by the inhabitants of those countries, whose exuberance discloses, from the bowels of a richer earth as its natural effusions, the most exquisite productions, as well of the vegetable as the mineral species, so that such abundance there, rather than a desire to extend them for the public utility, renders useless and unprofitable, what nature in her negligence adorned, and what man in his folly despised. It is even so with many Christians of the present day, my brethern; who, living in the effulgence of Gospel truth, when they contemplate the heroic virtues and exalted sanctity of the Saints of God, whose glowing lustre plays in the imagination, delights the will, but leaves the understanding unbending and unbent; are so far from communicating to others for the embellishment of their understanding or spiritual nutrition of their soul, the illustrious examples of the Saints of God; that rarely they derive any benefit themselves. The cause of this negligence may be properly reduced to three principal heads. First: the generality of Christians allow their minds to become engrossed and distracted by cares of less importance. The second cause is nearly allied to the first; because the mind thus employed, and consequently indisposed, becomes inattentive, and seems only for a moment to indulge a reflection, which leaves no lasting impression. The third is owing to a remissness in earnestly demanding of Almighty God, the graces necessary to enable the soul sufficiently to consider and esteem the virtuous actions of his own elect. I therefore feel particularly anxious, that you bestow all your attention on a subject, which, as the present seems amply to demand it, lest through my incapability, or

your own inattention, you may learn to undervalue these great blessings of heaven, which are dealt amongst men. I feel obliged (nor can it seem foreign to my purpose,) to preface in as brief a manner as possible, the infant state of our parent isle, before the light of Christianity first beamed on her borders. I do so, in order to make appear the almost insurmountable difficulties, which, our Saint underwent in order to reclaim that people to the light of Christianity; and at the same time that you, my brethren, by knowing the magnitude and danger of his labours, can with more ease, learn how to appreciate them. If I briefly sketch over some of the memorable actions connected with his parentage and birth, together with the time of his landing on the Irish coast; it is that you may conceive how, in the person of Saint Patrick, the wisdom of the Lord is made manifest in his bounty to man, and the virtues of the righteous are not forgotten. Permit me therefore, my brethren, while I trespass on your patience, but as short a time as to me shall seem possible, most earnestly to solicit your attention.

It is the opinion of some of the most eminent writers of the present day, who laboured more to enlighten than divide, whose principles were too honorable to allow partiality to usurp the dominion of truth, or bigotry to supplant the powers of reason, and in whose honest candor we can implicitly confide, that of all nations on the face of the globe, there was none which seemed to treasure up with such scrupulous attention, in the annual registers, the leading or particular actions of each elapsing year, and in the pandects of their nation, the legitimate succession and hereditary right of each succeeding ruler, who either governed himself or bore a part in the go-

vernment of the land; as have done the Irish, purely and legitimately, for the space of many succeeding ages, until the impious career of maddening ambition seemed to stalk through the land, as the twin-born sister of an unbridled, unrestrained licentiousness; which, waxing at length to a certain age, and a certain independence, became the fruitful parent of the most vicious and servile usurpation; and in the plenitude of such adoptive power, like an eagle with expanded talons, when he watches to pounce on his pray; not with less insolent power, those harpies went to destroy, by every possible means, hundreds of precious volumes, as well sacred as profane, and thus perished, in one moment, what the wreck of time, nor the envy of man, nor the mouldering vista of whole ages, could not have destroyed; and it is to this alone we can justly attribute the strange inconsistencies, the gross absurdities, the faithless plagiaries, which characterize the greater part of the *historians*, who sought as basely as disingenuously to attain the native lustre and pristine greatness of our Saintly Isle: to this, as its parent source, may be attributed that want the world now deploras, of those wholesome laws, and wise maxims, whose scattered fragments, after escaping the common wreck, are revered even to this day in every country and clime, as well by the learned Statesman as the sublimer Poet; and hence arises the difficulty of preserving for posterity the mere gleamings of truth, amongst the cavils of party, the ambition of men, and the licentiousness of the age. It is, however, almost universally allowed by the most enlightened historians, as well ancient as modern, that Ireland was peopled at a very early age. The celebrated Francis Plowden, whose laborious researches as an his-

torian, deserve well the highest encomiums of praise, as well from the lovers of antiquity as those who search to benefit futurity by their recommendations of the labours of disinterested writers, goes to assert that Ireland was first discovered by an Asiatic, named Aduah, sent by the grandson of Belus to explore new regions, in the year of the world 140. He returned to his master, bearing, as a trophy, a handful of the grass of the newly discovered isle; which sufficiently marked to him the fertility of its soil. The island remained thus discovered, and yet unpeopled until about three hundred years after the flood, when Partholanus the Ninth, in direct descent from Noah, and by nation a Scythian, sailed from Greece with his family and an army of a thousand soldiers, and took possession of the island; they were soon invaded, but they conquered their enemies; the stench of whose dead bodies brought on a plague, which laid the land desolate; and Ireland continued thus unpeopled for about the space of thirty years. Here we find that the country was inhabited by adventurers from different countries, but in consequence of the destruction of the works of antiquity before alluded to, historians must be silent, since they have not where-with-all to affirm, with any sufficient degree of certitude, either the country of those adventurers, or the time they remained in possession of the island. We have, however, for certain, from the writings of the most celebrated historians, as well ancient as modern, that after the lapse of 1080 years after the deluge and 1300 years before Christ, Nieul, the son of Pheniusa Farsa, after having obtained in marriage the daughter of Pharaoh, and lived on the borders of the Red Sea, when the Israelites were led out of Egypt by

the conduct of Moses. The descendants of Pheniusa Farsa were afterwards expelled their country, by the successors of Pharaoh, under the pretext of their having seconded the escape of the Israelites through the Red Sea. They accordingly emigrated and then settled in Spain; whence, after a few years stay, they embarked under the conduct of Milesius, at Brigantium, in Galicia, and arrived, after a prosperous voyage, on the coast of Ireland. This famous monarch soon gained the ascendancy over the inhabitants, as well in point of military prowess, as for the ability with which he soon modeled a code of wholesome laws for their future government.—He divided the kingdom equally between his sons, and called it Scotia after his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; which name it retained for many centuries, and was styled Scotia Major in contradistinction to Alba, which was called Scotia Minor: and further to elucidate, what among the learned is not even questioned, would be glaringly absurd: and hence was continued a successive line of Milesian kings unbroken and uninterrupted for the lengthened space of thirteen centuries, before the Christian Era, and continued until about the year 1168, when it was interrupted in the person Roger O'Conor. Of this line of kings we read, that one hundred and ten were Pagan, and the rest Christian. Of all kings of the Milesian Dynasty there has been none so eminently conspicuous for the wisdom of his laws, as has been Olam Folam. He reigned for the space of forty years, and contributed wonderfully to the improvement of the kingdom: he instituted a triennial assembly of the States, and founded such a wise code, as not only to keep his own subjects in peace, but which were copied

with avidity by many other nations. And such, my brethern, is the account given by historians of the antiquity of your native land, the fertility of the island, the constancy and valour of the inhabitants, the wisdom of their policy, and their unbounded hospitality. Such then has been the state of Ireland, my beloved Country; powerful in wealth, admirable for profane science and extensive in commerce; great in every thing, except the knowledge of the Supreme Being; without which nothing wears its own peculiar lustre. The wisdom of their councils was tainted by the share which impiety, and the worst of idolatry, bore in all their proceeding. We can collect even from Saint John Chrysostom, that nothing of importance was acted on, even by the kings themselves, and counsellors of state, unless by the advice, and after the mature deliberation, of the Druids, who were a set of idolaters, accustomed to offer sacrifice and hold their meetings in the open air, surrounded by a number of oak trees, set apart for that purpose; and from this is derived the word *druid*, from the Greek word *drus*, which in that language signifies an oak tree. Such was the extensive vineyard of the Lord, overgrown with impiety and repairing fast to its own destruction, until the goodness of the Lord, everlooking the ingratitude of man, desired at length to free that nation from the sink of idolatry; as his own elect, teach them how much they should suffer for their own obstinacy, and for the honor of his name and the establishment of his doctrine; and thus, in his eternal wisdom, he elevated in the person of Saint Patrick, their Apostie and Deliverer, a person enlightened by the maxims of his Gospel, and guided in all his actions, by the profanity of his knowledge. His birth,

his exiles and sufferings, the whole tenor of all his apostolic labours, shew the divine superintendence, and the manner the Almighty adopts in purifying and then exalting in grace and power, those whom he has ordained to preside over his people. *Exaltavi, etc. veritas mea, etc.*

The only authorities which claim the highest place in the judgment of the learned respecting the birth and extraordinary actions of our Saint, are principally gleaned from his own confessions, his letters to Corotic, the writings of the venerable Bede and the Aberdeen Breviary. It is to those sources, with a few exceptions, we rest indebted for what share of knowledge we can obtain on this important subject.

These, and a whole group of other writers, make Brittany the place of Saint Patrick's birth. We read that Calphurnius, the son of Politus, a presbiter, who lived near Jaburtinia, was married to Conchessa, a French lady, and as they assert, the niece of Saint Martin, the Bishop of Tours. Their morals were holy, their lives edifying; and the want of the poor always claimed their most anxious solicitude; while a lively charity for all, ornamented their whole conduct. Almighty God, as if to recompence their virtues, and to shew that the Lord is the reward of every good work, and of every virtuous action, blessed their happy union, by giving birth to that auspicious boy, who was destined in the rolls of futurity to observe the commands of the Lord, to become the mediator between God and man, and enliven the faith of Christians by the sanctity of his labours. At the sacred font he received the name of Suchar, by St. Germanus; he was called Mazonius at his profession; he received the name Patrick, which is to signify the father of many peo-

ple, by Pope Celestine the First, who sent him to preach the Gospel to the Irish nation. In his tender years nothing was seen foolish or childish in his comportment, he was the joy of his parents, and not less endeared to his surrounding neighbours. And thus he continued in the grace of the Lord, and with every virtue blessed, until about the beginning of his sixteenth year, when it was the will of heaven to put his virtue to the test, conformable to the testimonies of holy writ; as the furnace tries gold, and the fire of tribulation the just man, so were there severe trials prepared for our Apostle, in order thereby more amply to receive the riches of celestial grace. It was at the same age in which Joseph is recorded to have been sold to the Egyptians, that St. Patrick was torn from the endearments of his parents and brought captive to Ireland, where neither the severity of his employ, the cruelty of his masters, nor the idolatrous example of the people could corrupt his heart or estrange him from the Lord: even the idolators were moved by his example and astonished at his wonderful perseverance; in the ardent aspirations of his soul to the Lord, he passed six years in this painful bondage in the service of Milcho, and as it is mentioned in the law, that after six years spent in servitude, a person has a right to demand his liberty; and so at the expiration of six years spent in bondage, he was delivered after a manner truly miraculous and again restored to the embraces of his parents. An angel of the Lord expressly delegated for that purpose, came down from Heaven to comfort the beloved of God and instruct him in the ways necessary for effecting his deliverance; and as gold was so much esteemed by the avaricious king, the angel marked out the way for the fa-

voured of Heaven to a certain place, where but a little before the swine upturned the soil and exposed the precious metal; which the greedy monarch anxiously viewed, and thus consented to liberate the boy, the beloved of God, the delight as well as the admiration of the pagans themselves, the solicitude of the Angels, and him, whom the riches of the whole earth were not worthy to detain and much less to enjoy. And thus through the special guidance of heaven and under the tutelage of the Angels of God, we find St. Patrick once more restored to his country and his parents. Being thus delivered from the hardships of slavery and the goading cares of a painful exile, he was resolved that the precious hours of his innocent youth would not be consumed in idleness and ease; he resolved to improve and turn to profit the precious talent with which the Lord endowed him; and having obtained a perfect knowledge of the Irish language, during his stay in that country, he ardently sought now to attain a knowledge of other languages; and the better to realize this object, he put himself under the tutelage of the holy bishop of Germanus, the reputation of whose philosophical acquirements endeared him to the learned, and whose eminent sanctity already bespoke the sacred workings of the Holy Ghost. With him he remained for the space of thirteen years, reading and imbibing the holy scriptures, until he penetrated to the depth of ecclesiastical knowledge, as we find sufficiently recorded in the acts of St. Germanus; after which he received from the Saint, who was a prelate illustrious in his birth, in his nobility, in his life, in his learning and his office; but above all was he illustrious for his miracles, the different degrees of holy orders, and at length the sacerdotal digni-

ty, which he rendered illustrious by his example, dignified by his conduct, and shewed that it was above every thing earthly, by that earnest zeal with which he continually aimed at the salvation and eternal happiness of men. With this holy desire he remained for some time with his cousin, the blessed Martin of Tours, endeavouring if possible to become more enlightened in the science of the Saints, and from this holy prelate, who was a Monk, he received the rules and constitution of the monastic order, and returned sometime afterwards to St. Germanus. But the Almighty who hath exalted him from his people, after burnishing the recesses of his soul with the lustre of sanctity and grace, thought it now time that he should commence his apostolic labours, by cultivating his vineyard, which was as yet neglected and unprofitable.

Therefore taking leave of the holy and venerable Germanus, ~~was desirous to season~~ that piety, so carefully imbibed and which filled every avenue of his seraphic soul, by visiting the capital of the Christian world, the venerable tombs of those illustrious and venerable martyrs, who triumphed over the world by despising it; over hell itself by conquering it, and from whose blood came forth the immortal phalanx of Christian heroes, against whose impenetrable ægis no power could avail. Whose waving flag unfurled proclaimed in Heaven, that victory which their flitting souls went to ratify before the eternal tribunal of divine Justice; while the earth below empurpled with their gore, declared her bosom the field, and Rome the theatre of the great, the memorable, the glorious and immortal conflicts, which, to the latest ages, will characterize the Martyrs of the Church of God.

It is here, my brethren, his piety found ample room for indulgence, and here he treasured in his mind the sacred dogmas, the wholesome maxims, and canonical institutes of the Church of Christ, on which he afterwards formed the different institutions which he caused, after a few years culture in the hearts of the people, to ornament their country; thus he continued indulging the ardour of his pious soul, when the fame of his eminent sanctity reached the ears and rested on the attention of the Roman Pontiff Celestine, the first of that name, and 43d. in succession from Saint Peter; this eminent man having a year or two before sent to Ireland for its conversion, his Arch-deacon Paladius, who, accompanied by twelve ecclesiastics, attempted to convert the people; but after building three or four houses of religious institution, he was obliged to retire and abandon his project; and returning by Scotland he baptized many persons and founded three Churches, in possession of which he left Augustine, Benedict, and Sylvester, he at length died in Britain, on the borders of the Picts. It is then that the Sovereign Pontiff, being informed of his death, and the great learning of the Irish, lamented that such a people should be doomed to pass their lives in darkness and impiety, and strangers to the light of Christianity: he then resolved to elevate our Saint to the Episcopal order, and sent him immediately on that mission, for which, from his infancy, the Lord seemed to destine him, and which he undertook with amazing fortitude and courage. No sooner was his arrival announced on the northern coast of Ireland, than the rage of idolaters began to swell against him; the magicians opposed his entrance in the most determined and violent manner, because being either told by some of the

inhabitants, or instructed by the magicians, they seemed to expect his arrival, and await it. This cannot by any means seem strange or incredible, that God to enhance the merit of his servant would permit this to happen, since we read that the soothsayer Balaam and the King Nebuchadnezzar foretold the coming of Christ, and the devils themselves bore testimony to the Son of God; and so on the arrival of our Apostle, that all the force of hell seemed to oppose him on the very onset, but the Lord commanded, and his delight was to obey. He therefore saw unmoved the preparations, as they thought for his destruction; he saw an armed band of hellish fiends beset the shore, where he was to disembark; he was aware of the malice of King Loigaine, who gave orders to have him put to death, should he attempt to touch the land.— Such were the appalling circumstances which presented themselves in the commencement of his Apostolic labours, which were sufficient to deter from their purpose any but the Saints of God; confiding in whose omnipotence, he advanced from the bark, unawed and unintimidated, in the midst of the surrounding dangers; when with more than hellish rage or canine force, they excited against him a huge dog which they considered would have severed him in pieces, but as soon as the messenger of God extended his hand, the animal fell immediately to the earth lifeless; and, as if petrified, began to shew no future marks of his former fierceness: nor was this example of the power of the Lord in his faithful servant, sufficient to restrain the satanic rage with which they opposed him. There was among this infuriated tribe, a certain man named Dichu, powerful in strength, of gigantic stature, and having no humanity, he determined to make

manifest his acknowledged strength in the destruction of the Saint, when it was the will of the Lord to contract the sinew of that very arm in which he held the sword determined for destruction; he thus remained, his strength unavailing, as a lasting memorial of the insufficiency of human force to impede what the Lord would ordain. Such miraculous power as was thus manifested by the Apostle, baffled in its growth, the best concerted plans of the magicians, made manifest the power of God; and struck with astonishment and dismay, the surrounding multitude of unbelievers; and that very individual who, but a moment before, vowed death and vengeance, is already beginning to shew the most signal marks of repentance; and as the first in crime is also the first to do penance, he and his whole family receive the faith of Christ and are baptized as the first fruits of our Saint's apostolic labours. He caused, shortly after, a church to be reared, as a signal trophy of his victory, on the very place where the enemy would have terminated his labours, in their commencement and in the very onset. The fame of his miracles continued to spread throughout the entire kingdom: the most powerful opposition came from the king and the magicians, whose entire care was employed to obstruct the light of the gospel; but the fame of his miracles overawed the most obdurate hearts; the lustre of his sanctity shone forth like the meridian sun in the midst of the surrounding clouds, which, at the same time that it afforded life and nutrition, it denied not its light nor animating force. His labors to establish in this island the faith of Christ, seemed to be evidently beyond the power of any human being. Every act of his marked the miraculous power of the Almighty hand that

conducted it; his prayers and ardent sighs for the conversion of his people were almost uninterrupted; so, that it is with justice we might say, that his whole life was made up of one continued prayer. And these were the weapons which gained him the affection of every heart; with these he conquered the most obdurate of his enemies; with these he triumphed over whole armies of infidels; with these he hurled from their foundation, and laid in ashes the pagan shrines, where every thing was adored but God alone, and reared from their ruins a temple where was offered the sacrifice of righteousness and propitiation; where vice and idolatry before bore sway, virtue and religion bear now the most uncontrolled dominion. Many thousands offer themselves to receive at the holy font, the regeneration of life, and be instructed in the law of the Lord; the face and order of the entire kingdom is now completely changed: Religion, holy religion shines in her primitive lustre, and uninterrupted, reigns throughout the land. And well might it be said in the words of the Roman poet, and with more justice:

*The base degenerate iron offspring ends :
A golden progeny from Heaven descends.*

The whole nation harmonized, in that holy repose which religion alone is capable to inspire, seemed as if renovated; every thing seemed to savour of the holy unction of piety and virtue. There are colleges established in different parts of the kingdom, where the youth are formed in the more sublime sciences of ecclesiastical knowledge. There are convents of different kinds, and different institutes for those whose vocations call them to a state of monastic retirement; while others attend the secular duties with all that scrupulousness of attention, requisite in a country but lately blessed with the light of Christianity;

the fine arts were cultivated in an eminent degree, and the youth improved in all the different acquirements and branches of useful knowledge, which can contribute to adorn the mind or embellish the understanding; their commerce is extensive, and their character proverbially hospitable; their attachment to their religion, and the sacred ardour which accompanied their devotion, merits that their nation should be styled the island of Saints; and thus it was that the Lord requited the labors of his servant who gained with the talent he received, ten thousand fold: but the Lord, whose decrees are impenetrable to man, would shew that nation how much they should suffer for his name, and be themselves the means of enlightening other nations by their example. Ireland now gave a specimen of every thing great; she was called the emporium of arts, the seat of wisdom, the centre of knowledge, the arcana of science, the mart of literature, the island of Saints; and seemed of all nations, the most worthy of the name. We find in the writings of the venerable Bede, that the Irish converted to Christianity, not only Northumberland, but also all the Saxons and Angles; and declares, that the Irish, with a generosity unheard of in any other country, not only instructed them gratis, but fed them also. We find in the writings of the learned Dr. Milner, that the Irish, for many centuries, were the instructors of nations, to whom (said he,) you are indebted for the preservation of the Bible, the Fathers and the Classics: it short, of the very means by which you have acquired whatever literature you seem to possess. What country has not shared in the apostolic labours of Ireland? Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and Switzerland, owe a great deal to the labours of the Irish missionaries, who established the most distinguish-

ed Churches in all these countries, as we find amply attested in Lanagan's ecclesiastical history. The English even to this day, stand indebted to the Irish for the establishment of their celebrated college of Oxford, founded by John Scotus: as well as that of Padua to the same; that of Paris to Claudius Clemens: and thus did Ireland deal around the riches of her stores, unsparingly to the nations that seemed to stand in need of her assistance; and thus she flourished, with every virtue blessed, until she became united with her sister England.

Hitherto, my brethren, we have seen the infant state of Ireland; we have continued to examine her till we saw the sunshine of gospel light illumine the darker horizon around her; and such were the blessings she enjoyed in the reign of Henry II: but, my dearest brethern, you have ample room to ask if her virtues were so conspicuous, and her national independence so superlatively great, if her religion was so holy and her sons so brave, if her hospitality be proverbial and her faith be sincere, with her pride and her wealth, her glory and fame, how is it that the persecuting lust of oppression waves over her, while dissention preys on her vitals: what crimes has she committed to merit six centuries of pain and penalties? why does she sustain the fangs of confiscation, and why is she braved by the flaming sword of dreadful persecution? Has she plighted her faith, forsworn her honor or denied her allegiance? Has her sons appeared in arms against the state, or taken part with the common enemy? or was her faith, her honor, her power, her past services, to be rejected and despised without a just or reasonable cause? Could the pretext for such cruelty be caprice? Could maddening ambition rise to such a height without being restrained by the self conviction, that such wanton

tyranny should be one day atoned for; surely such cruelty, such villany, such unexampled barbarity, such desolating and unheard of spoliation; in a word, such a continual and almost uninterrupted chain of devastating usurpation as Ireland then suffered, cannot be without a cause, nor such cruelties without a crime. Listen then, my brethren, in order that you may learn the magnitude of her crime in the heinousness of her offence. The first charge is that of high treason, because that faith which she received from her forefathers, and which the Apostle of Christ brought into her land, she resolved to maintain with the last drop of her blood, and expire in pronouncing the sacred tenets which support its basis. And now contemplate the greatness of her crime, since this is her only treason. What threats, what pains, what cruelties and carnage, has she not undergone, in order that she might be uncatholicized: but the sons of Ireland disregarded the threats of man, while she kept inviolable the laws of God, and the maxims of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and it is thus that the love of religion was soon termed high treason, by her faithless sister, and so faithlessly was she persecuted as such. If she exhorted her children to keep unbroken the faith of Christ and the religion of their fathers, it is then, oh! yes, it is then she was denounced as a traitor, and her children were called rebels to the State; in those days, were a catholic to endeavour to protect his property, he might expect to be prosecuted as a murderer or a midnight robber; because to be a Catholic, was to be persecuted, despoiled, deprived of all property and confidence, and to be a mere Catholic was to suffer death, by the meanest vagrant whose hardened feelings encouraged him to do so. Ask not then, my brethren, the cause why Ireland suffered so much: behold in this the extent of all her faults and the enormity of her most heinous crimes; and to deny one

word of this, I defy the most bigoted heart, and the most scrupulous investigator. No, my brethren, these facts are too well recorded, to suffer a denial, they are too strong for bigotry to oppose, or falsehood to colour; it was her faith alone that rendered Ireland politically degraded; and it is that same faith which seems to destine their misfortunes at home, a means of enlightening other nations abroad; it was lately remarked, as well by an eminent divine as a learned civilian, who communicated it to me, that it seemed to be the will of the Lord to disperse a portion of that people, who suffered so much for the faith of Christ, throughout the different parts of the habitable world, where the Catholic faith, and the maxims of Christianity, are less known, in order that they may call to the faith of Christ, those who are as yet separated from the Church. This remark I take as judicious, and worthy the attention of the faithful, because who will question the will of the Lord, and who will be his counsellor. I am certain there can be no surer sign of the love of God towards a people, than the persecutions and misfortunes they suffer from the malice of man. It is thus we must attribute to the Irish missionaries in India, the vast number of persons that every day are leaving the darkness of impiety and embracing the Catholic faith. What nation has not heard of their attachment to their religion? Has not Africa shared in the pious zeal of Irishmen, until the savages themselves began to own, through their agency, the sovereign power, and everlasting dominion, of the only true and living God? And after this manner, all Europe seemed to share in the labours of the sons of that saintly isle, either conquering in their armies in the field, or braving the more inclement storms of the main, or teaching the rude and unlettered Indian to adore his God in the lonely haunts of some sequestered forest. Are they less active in the New World? I venture to say not,

and let the rich, the independent, the flourishing, and happy, State of Catholic Maryland, bear the first testimony to my assertion; let New-York, in the splendour of her greatness, let Baltimore and Charleston thank the wisdom of their prelates and the zeal of their Catholic pastors for the enjoyment of that social harmony, that religious and happy concord, which peculiarly characterizes each of these happy States; but these are Catholic pastors for the most part, and these are Irishmen: is their ardour for the establishment of their ancient faith, less conspicuous amongst the snowy mountains of Canada? The circumstances attending their pitiful situation, seems amply to declare the contrary; you all know, and most of you have been eye witnesses, my brethern, to what the Irish generally suffer in this country, before they can establish themselves in these colonies; it is, however, by Irishmen that the most part of the townships are peopled; it is by Irishmen that the canals are made and most part of the public works are performed: but contending with all these difficulties, have they at any time neglected, or contemned that religion, for which their forefathers suffered so much; far from it, for their principal and almost their most anxious care, is to establish a house of worship to their Creator: if, however, this be not practicable in their societies and assemblies, in the lonely recesses of some neighbouring forest, you could find them recount to their children, and practice in their conduct, the maxims and tenets of the religion which they profess. Who can cease to commend their spirit of religion, or applaud their intrepidity and stedfastness, when he considers their amazing and unexampled perseverance, in the midst of dangers which threatened immediate destruction, or a more protracted starvation; but why do I recall these painful reflexions, which I already feel redoubles the ardour of their sensations, and while they

flit from my tongue, make an impression on my heart, of which it would be unsusceptible were it not Irish, and were the happiness of that nation, and the prosperity of her sons, in whatever clime they may roam or land they possess, truly not to be my earliest joy, my fondest hope, and the dearest link that binds unstained, the most unbiased, the most endearing, and the most sacred affections of my soul; yes, my brethern, a minister of the Gospel of Christ, I would spurn with contempt whoever would bush at the expositions of its maxims, and that open candour that pronounces to the world, that to be Catholic is to be loyal to the Sovereign, faithful to the State, and charitable to all men; and that to be Irish because of her catholicity, is not to be degraded. I then recal these reflections, my brethern, that after having endured so much in your own native land for the love of the God you adore and the religion you profess, you may learn to appreciate the happiness you can now enjoy in the unrestricted exercise of the religion you revere, and the love of the triunity and unitrinity which you profess to adore. I do so that you may learn to pay that obedience and respect to the civil authorities of the State, which are authorized by law and sanctioned by the Gospel of Christ, and on which depend the harmony of peace, and the well-being of the community. I mention it, that you may justly esteem the life and actions of the illustrious Apostle of Jesus Christ, for the celebration of whose solemnity we are this day assembled, by handing down to the latest posterity, the signal marks which pronounced him the Apostle of Ireland, and the chosen emissary of the Lord; that thus by imitating his actions in this life, and thereby procuring the happiness of your neighbours of every denomination, you may arrive at length at the haven of immortal bliss, which I wish may be the portion of every member in this society. Amen.